

Tracing Early English LDS Convert Ancestry in England

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HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- John Wycliff – published the NT Bible into English
- William Tyndale – follows up with the complete Bible publication—disseminating copies from Germany to England.
- At the martyrdom of Tyndale (1536), he, in the act of dying declared, “Lord, open the King of England’s eyes!” Next year, in 1537, Henry VIII approves the printing of the English Bible!
- Bible printing in English, and other languages, plus the subsequent Martin Luther-led Protestant Reformation in Europe, ignites England into a firestorm of Reform and subsequent Protestantism
- This wave of Reform, paved the way for a fertile environment for the planting of the restored Gospel’s seed in England
- Many early LDS converts on average aligned or joined with at least 4 other religions before joining the Church

ENGLAND’S EARLY (LDS) HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:

Preston was known anciently by the Romans as “Priest town”. By 1837, it was one of the most religiously diverse towns in just about all of England. First Missionaries began proselytizing 19 July, 1837 at Preston, Lancashire

Three ‘waves’ of emigration from England & Great Britain

What other significant event began at this time? A: Civil Registration of Births, Marriages and Deaths, July, 1837...

- 1) 1837-1849 – approx. 11,000 had emigrated
- 2) 1849-1869 – approx. 20,000 resided in Utah/Idaho – based on census demographics
- 3) 1869-1887 - ~24,000 resided in Utah/Idaho

Local LDS Population Demographics in 19th Century England:

The Britain of those days was ripe for a message of hope, and the preaching of the Restored Church of Jesus Christ was timely. By June 1842 there were 8,245 members of the Church in the United Kingdom and Ireland. Six years later there were 18,000, and by the end of 1851 England had 24,199 Latter-day Saints, Wales had 5,244, Scotland had 3,291, and Ireland had 160—a total of almost 33,000—and an additional 11,000 [sic] had already

emigrated to America. There were more members of the Church in the United Kingdom and Ireland than there were in the whole 1850 population of the Utah Territory (11,714)

Fourteen years of missionary labors (by 1851) brought—

- a total of 44,000 British converts
- 11,000 converts had already joined and migrated into Utah; about 1,900 from the British Isles
- 33,000 in England alone awaited emigration by earning monies and, later emigration was facilitated by the implementation of the PEF (Perpetual Emigrating Fund) or, funded emigration

For example, Mary Ann (Pressdee) Phillips –

- b. 1773, Leigh, Worcs.
- Baptized by Elder Wilford Woodruff – 1840, Herefordshire
- Emigrated to Utah in 1850
- Buried Davis County, 1871 – age 98

SOME CONSIDERATIONS IN RESEARCH STRATEGY

Did you know that many of our early LDS convert ancestors—

- Aligned themselves with approximately 4 other religious denominations (Nonconformist churches) *before* joining the (LDS) Church!
- 36% of big city (LDS) were born in that city; 64% were born out in the countryside but later migrated into big cities
- After conversion, it took our early LDS ancestors an average of 13 years to save-up to emigrate to Great Salt Lake Valley—up until the P.E.F. (1856);
- After the P.E.F. (Perpetual Emigration Fund) took full effect (1850's) many were able to emigrate within 2 years after baptism
- Eighty percent (80%) of early LDS came from working class society; 20 percent were middle class
- Most working class saints who for ~9-13 years while saving monies in order to emigrate, may have attended several LDS branches, so search each; some became 'lost'—never emigrated
- Many families can be identified in Civil registrations of BMDs by Mormon-ish given names like: i.e. Nephi, Moroni, Brigham, Heber, Hyrum, Parley, Orson, etc
- FamilySearch Family Tree (FT) is the key resources for locating most early LDS ancestors - ~85%
- Early LDS convert ancestors' names have recently been (mostly) indexed from Great Britain LDS records (incl. "living" baptisms), but many have not yet been published in FT; a pre-1907 indexing project is now in-process and nearing completion.
- Some died—waiting in England to emigrate, or on the high seas, or on the plains or via epidemics (cholera at St Louis, Winter Quarters, etc). Until 1851, nearly 50% of children died

- Of those choosing to remain: some left the Church due to inactivity, lack of nurturing after local church leaders emigrated, or personal apostasy. Especial Note: Many have not yet received all their Temple ordinances
- Some emigrants decided to move on to other climes and places rather than Salt Lake Valley, ignoring Prophetic counsel, i.e. the lure of goldfields, the Re-organized Church divide, offers of properties in new townships and boom town speculations, 'greener' pastures (vs. SL Valley), etc

QUICK REFERENCE TOOLS FOR LOCATING LDS BRANCHES

Some reference tools for locating LDS branches in 19th Century Great Britain include:

1. *Imperial Gazetteer of England & Wales* – www.visionofbritain.org.uk/expertsearch
2. *LDS In Britain* (FHL Brit Ref. book 942 D24L, Ref. shelf #332) – county maps; digital access

This FHL British register book contains LDS Branch names:

- Alpha-arranged by country; then by county; then name of township/parish
 - County maps showing towns with branches in highlight
 - Lists all LDS branches (by number) within county borders
 - Lists microfilm[s] for each LDS branch in Great Britain
3. (LDS) Church History Library Online Catalog at www.churchhistorycatalog.lds.org– type only the name of town and the word “branch”; has some branch records that the Family History Library does not have. Search under the 1) town name, and 2) the word “Branch”

LDS Branch records –

British counties with highest number of LDS branches (congregations) include—

- London (55)
- Lancashire (48)
- Yorkshire (42)
- County Durham (28)
- Lincolnshire (20)
- Gloucestershire (23)
- Glamorganshire, Wales (22)
- Derbyshire (21)
- Cheshire (20)
- Kent (28)
- Monmouthshire (20)
- Lanarkshire, Scot. (19)
- Nottinghamshire (19)
- Sussex (19)
- Essex (17)
- Staffordshire (17)
- Hertfordshire (13)
- Fifeshire, Scot. (13)
- Ayrshire, Scot. (12)
- Herefordshire (3+)

LDS Branch records – in U.S.—

- **Winter Quarters**, NE (22 wards) – see Church History Department (CHD)
- **Missouri Valley branches** - ~15 branches – see Church History Department (CHD)
- **Nauvoo** - ~10-20+ branches(?)
- **St Louis, MO** – note: hundreds of deaths in 1849 “cholera” epidemic
- The Family History Library online catalog - Find microfilm copies of LDS branch membership records, be certain to search under the town or parish name, and under the words, “LDS Branch” or “Conference” at www.familysearch.org/catalog

MORE & LESSER USED ONLINE “LOCATE” RESOURCES & TOOLS

Here are some popular and lesser-known Online resources and finding tools for identifying LDS converts:

1. **Civil registration** (see www.FreeBMD.org.uk or especially www.gro.gov.uk) - search for both the surname and the mother’s maiden name (if known; if it’s not, search Freebmd for the marriage which gives the maiden name) Mormon-ish type names. Many children born with a Mormon-style or type of given name, often died very young and were missed in the government-sponsored vital event registrations. Given names such as Brigham Young Pridmore, Moroni Huntington, Alma Manwaring, Nephi McKee, Joseph Smith Harrison, Heber Chase Tyler, and many, many more. See www.FreeBMD.org.uk
2. **Mormon Migration (Index):** Brigham Young University’s History department has compiled an excellent online database of early LDS emigrants from especially Great Britain during the 19th century. <http://mormonmigration.lib.byu.edu/>
3. **Early Church Information File (ECIF) - 1830-1900** – Images of index cards in alphabetical order for some members of the LDS Church. The names on the cards come primarily from the following sources:
 - LDS church records (some, not most)
 - Journals/diaries
 - Biographies
 - Cemetery records
 - Immigration records

ECIF is comprised of published books and the best available databases, online Collection totals 1,091,919 viewable images. This collection (the Early Church Information File (ECIF)- 1830-1900 card index images now online (alpha-arranged) may be viewed online at: <https://familysearch.org/search/collection/2078505>

4. **Mormon Pioneer Overland Travel Index** – see <https://history.lds.org/overlandtravel>; a significant database for finding early pioneers’ background
5. **Worldwide LDS Ship Register** - Margery Taylor, former FHL research consultant (ret.) compiled this excellent resource that lists from 1840 to 1913, LDS immigrant ships (many British) and their sailing dates and ports of arrival into the U.S., including FHL film numbers to each ship’s passenger list/port arrival date here in the U.S.A. See either-

FHL book US/Can 289.309 T216w or

FHL film US/Can no. 1592753 Item 1

6. **LDS Emigrant Roster and Voyage History, Crossing the Ocean Index, 1840-1869** – Compiled sources including the following:
 - Mormon passenger ship lists (1840-1850 & 1857-1860)

- Mormon passenger ship lists
- Books with Mormon emigrants
- Perpetual Emigration Fund emigrants
- Handcart pioneers (1856-1860)
- Mormon pioneers memorialized with Sons of Utah Pioneers
- Emigrants on the ship "Brooklyn" and Australian ships

FHL CD-ROM no. 60

7. **The Church History Library Records** – (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day saints) holds the following set of excellent records collections (only some of which have been indexed), and each of which relate to or are attached to the Perpetual Emigrating Fund (PEF) including passenger lists. These records include some of the following books/registers:

CR 371 1 PEF General Files, 1850-1887

- Organizational records
- List of family members being sent for
- 1856 rescue

CR376 2 PEF Financial Accounts, 1849-1886

- Ledgers
- Bonds
- Promissory Notes
- Journals
- Receipt books
- Cash book
- Other financial records

See the Church History Library's online Catalog at: <http://churchhistorycatalog.lds.org>

FHL digital book: *Names of Persons and Sureties Indebted to the Perpetual Emigrating Fund Company From 1850-1877 Inclusive:*

https://dcms.lds.org/delivery/DeliveryManagerServlet?dps_pid=IE12201744

8. **US Census Records** – Search ALL U.S. Census records for duration of your ancestor's life, because one or more might—
- Provide state or country of birth
 - Name[s] of siblings or other relatives
 - Approx. year of birth (based on age)
 - Utah census records from 1850-1880 list ecclesiastical ward
9. **LDS Ward or Branch records** – may include:
- (Specific) Place of birth
 - Name[s] of parents, incl. mother's maiden name
 - Date of birth
 - Place of baptism & confirmation
 - Last residence
 - Where moved to
 - Place of (current) residence
 - Names of siblings

Search FamilySearch Catalog for city of residence and then Church Records

10. Reorganized LDS Church Ward Records – didn't get to Utah

If an individual did not end up in Utah, they may have settled somewhere along the way and may have joined the Reorganized LDS Church. Their ward records contain:

- (Specific) Place of birth
- Some forms may contain names of parents
- Date of birth
- Place of baptism and confirmation

Search FamilySearch Catalog for city of residence and then Church Records

11. LDS Deceased Membership Records, 1941-1988 and R-LDS Deceased Membership Files, 1877-1995 – may include:

- (Specific) Place of birth
- Name[s] of parents, including mother's maiden name
- Date of birth
- Place of baptism and confirmation
- Name of spouse
- Names of children
- Death date and place, in some instances cause of death

FHL first film no. LDS 884001 and RLDS film no. 1985756 (both in alphabetical order)

12. LDS Church Census Records – church membership in 1914, 1920, 1925, 1930, 1940, 1955, and 1960:

- Name[s] of parents
- Mother's maiden name (after 1914)
- Age
- Date of birth (beginning in 1920)
- Where born (beginning in 1930)
- Where the family resided

FHL first film no. 25708 (alphabetical order by surname and then given name of head of household)

13. US Death Certificates post-1890 – may call for and include the following critical information:

- Date of birth
- (Specific) Place of birth
- Given names of parents
- Maiden surname of mother

Utah Death Certificates, 1904-1964

<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1747615?collectionNameFilter=false>

Utah, Salt Lake County Death Records, 1849-1949

<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1459704?collectionNameFilter=false>

Utah, Utah County Records, 1850-1962, Vital Records

<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1459704?collectionNameFilter=false>

Utah, Davis County Records, 1869-1953, Vital Records

<https://www.familysearch.org/search/image/index?owc=M6GJ-H29%3A216677101%3Fcc%3D1922448>

RESEARCH STRATEGIES FOR TRACING ENGLAND LDS CONVERTS

1. Use census records to obtain a baseline or the framework of the individual and family
2. Use Civil Registrations of births, marriages and deaths indexes– (esp. G.R.O., Freebmd)
3. Use parish and church registers to find baptisms/marriages and burials/deaths for all family members
4. Use the Family Tree to find what data is already found about the person
5. Use Early Church Information File
6. Use Overland Emigration
7. Minnie Margett's index
8. US Federal Census records

Other Considerations

Did you know that numerous early LDS converts have their origination in England's north country? And that ancient parishes in England's northern counties of Yorkshire, Cheshire, Northumberland and especially Lancashire have numerous smaller (satellite) Church of England units called chapelries which subdivide each parish—and which kept their own baptisms, burials and sometimes, marriage registers? Many researchers do not know about these smaller chapels of ease, because they're oft times un-mentioned. No single reference aid or tool names these accurately. Since the majority of Englanders were baptized in the Church of England, identifying all chapelries is critical to locating ancestors' birth/christenings, burials and marriages in these counties.

Average LDS convert ancestor associated with as many as four or more Nonconformist denominations

See FamilySearch Catalog for available church registers/records of each Nonconformist denomination. Search the FS Catalog under the name of the parish township or city where your ancestor resided:

www.FamilySearch.org/catalog. Most registers have been indexed by FamilySearch.org).

Nonconformists & Their Church Registers of Baptisms, Marriages, etc. – which include many later LDS

Online databases may be located at the following websites:

1. FamilySearch.org - databases area searchable online
2. BMDregisters.co.uk
3. theGenealogist.co.uk (see above)
4. Ancestry.co.uk – has some nonconformist church registers indexed and online
5. Google to find online data offerings for single church denominations in a locality

Tools that aid in locating all churches (including both Church of England chapelries and Nonconformist—including LDS branch congregations) in each township parish, are as follows:

1. Wiki.FamilySearch.org – lookup by parish or township name
2. England Jurisdictions Project (Maps)
3. Lewis' *Topographical Dictionary of England* – provides an 1848 historical snapshot of ecclesiastical jurisdictions and tells what churches existed in each place at that time; is online at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/catalogue.aspx> (1848)
4. John Wilson's *Imperial Gazetteer of England & Wales* – online at www.visionofbritain.org.uk/expert (as #3 above but for the year 1870)

5. Donald Steel's *National Index of Parish Registers* vols 1-12; see FHL book call #942 D2ste vol I-XII; digitized and available for some volumes at www.FamilySearch.org/catalog; use "Keyword" search to find available online volumes.

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